

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. The following remarks are responsive to the Office Action of May 1, 2003. Claims 17-20 remain in the application.

The Examiner has chosen to limit the term "processing" by an exemplary embodiment described in the specification. Specifically, limiting the term "processing" to the step of electroplating and electropolishing. It should be noted, however, that those two processing steps are clearly recited in claims 19 and 20. Under the doctrine of claim differentiation, each claim in a patent is presumptively different in scope. Comark Communications, Inc. v. Harris Corp., 156 F.3d 1182,1187 (Fed. Cir. 1998). Limitations stated in dependent claims are not to be read into the independent claims from which they depend. Carlan Tech Inc. v. Surgical Dynamics, Inc., 177 F.3d 968, 971-72 (Fed. Cir. 1999). The independent claim should be given broader scope than a dependent claim to avoid rendering the dependent claim redundant. Dow Chemical Co. v. United States, 226 F.3d 1334, 1341-42 (Fed. Cir. 2000). Independent claim 17 recites an enclosed vessel to retain a processing fluid and processing the wafer utilizing the processing fluid. Only in the dependent claims 19 and 20 are the features for processing the wafer using the processing fluid to deposit copper material on to the wafer (electroplating) and using the processing fluid to remove copper fluid from the wafer (electropolishing) set forth respectively. Therefore, under the doctrine of claim differentiation, independent claim 17 reciting, "utilizing the processing fluid" should be given broader scope than the dependent claims 19 and 20.

The claims have been rejected as obvious over Tamaki et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,853,559 (Tamaki) in view of Getchel et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,019,164 (Getchel). Although Tamaki discusses a similar method and apparatus for processing semiconductor wafers, wherein the wafer forms the floor of the apparatus, the addition of Getchel fails to teach or suggest the upper body coupled to the base by a flexible coupling that allows the upper body to tilt relative to the base. Getchel discloses a device that will maintain the height and planar orientation of the top surface during thermal expansion through the use of hardened spherical balls and hardened pads. Getchel makes clear that this configuration maintains the chuck at a constant height through thermal changes by using offsetting thermal expansions. The o-rings referred to in Getchel provide a vacuum seal but do not provide any flexibility in the coupling between the chuck components as recited in the present claims. In addition, Getchel specifically discusses the use of three support members to provide stability to the chuck to prevent tilting of the upper portion of the chuck. In contrast, the present claims recite an upper body coupled to the base by a flexible coupling that

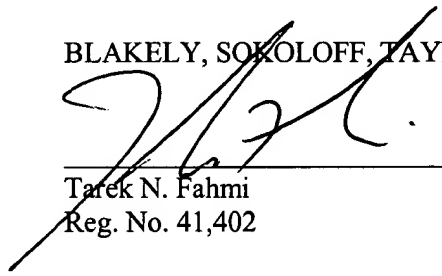
allows for the upper body to tilt relative to the base. Therefore, the claims are patentable over Tamaki in view of Getchel.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. If there are any fees associated with this communication, please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

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